ESSA English Language Learner Work Group
MacKay Building, Pierre, South Dakota
February 17, 2017

The fourth meeting of the ESSA English Language Learner Work Group began at 9:07 a.m. on February 17, 2017, in the MacKay Building, Pierre, South Dakota. The ESSA English Language Learner Work Group was formed to make recommendations to the South Dakota Department of Education (SD DOE) pertaining to changes in school accountability in the new reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act known as the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA).

Welcome
The group was welcomed by Shannon Malone, SD DOE Title administrator.

Work Group Membership
Members of the work group present were: Gwyneth Dean-Witte, ESL Consultant and Consultant with ESA 3; Carla Steffensen, Lake Area Technical Institute; Kerri Whipple, ESL Consultant; CeCi Estes, Belle Fourche School District; Tanya Vitek, Menno School District; Laura Willemssen, Huron School District; and Joselyn Schmitz, Huron School District.

Consultants in attendance were Susan Wagner, consultant Data Driven Enterprises; Scott Norton, strategic initiative director Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO); and Pete Goldschmidt, California State University Northridge.

Several SD DOE staff persons were in attendance.

Review of Recommendations from the December 16 Meeting
The work group made a clarification on awarding points. Additional language underlined.

0 – Students who should have taken ACCESS but did not
.25 - Students who took ACCESS but are not meeting growth goals
.5 – Students who are not on track to exit within state-defined time frame but are meeting partial growth goals
1.0 - Students who are meeting the state's growth goals or who exited on time
1.25 – Students who exited ahead of state's prescribed time frame
No more than 10 points may be accrued.

Growth is measured from ACCESS test to ACCESS test, not W-APT(WIDA- ACCESS Placement Test, an English language proficiency screener test). The time period prior to the first ACCESS test is year zero. We provide services from the first W-APT to the ACCESS test. A student exiting upon taking their first ACCESS test received services in the program from the time of the W-APT even though this is considered year zero.

Comments –
- Concern was voiced over districts being awarded .25 points for students taking a test required by the law.

- Should there be a parallel chart for kids who test out in the first year? A school would miss getting a score for the students who are the best scoring students because they were never in the subgroup.
- We have had some districts use this exact way to game the system by testing students who are not EL, but do not test well in academic English even though they do not speak another language.
- Many districts receive funding to serve ELs but do not provide the services. A district will receive funding up until the student scores 4.0 on the ACCESS.
- Many districts have added EL services and found that it made no difference in testing scores. The district had to determine that maybe the students were not EL students.
- Some districts will have students in the program one year, then not in the program the next year.
- When using the data over multiple years, you are counting the same students multiple times. It would make sense to monitor the students over time.
- No subgroup points are awarded at the district level, but we will roll-up the data to make public the subgroup at the district level. According to the current data, approximately sixty districts would have over ten students (over three years of data) and those district subgroups could be made public; sixty districts out of 150 districts. At the school level, 43% of all schools would never be accountable as they would not have ten students over three-years.
- Efforts need to be made to incentivize more districts to implement programming.

Recommendation - addition to the recommendation above.   If the school does not meet the minimum N size of 10, the EL students would roll-up to the district. If the district has at least 10 students over the three-year period, points would be calculated. The points would be apportioned back to the schools that had at least one EL student within the three-year period. The schools without EL students would not receive points.

Comments -
- The goal resets at the time they take the ACCESS.
- The composite score is not the appropriate score to use when looking at the proficiency of a student. The WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment) composite scores should be used.
- The new WIDA scores will correlate well with the Smarter Balanced scores.
- The new WIDA scoring will be approximately one level higher then on the previous scoring.
- We don't want to exit students who need services or they will regress. We want our schools to know that the exit criteria should be fairly rigorous so the district is assured the students are truly ready to exit.
- Some states and districts have seen students exit and then show that the students are sliding. The student needs to re-enter the program. Does a student truly re-enter the program? We have seen this in SD where the students re-enter the program, but there aren't any services offered that meet their needs.
- What about the students who couldn't show growth because they took the test only one time? Are the schools penalized because the student didn't take the test a second time?

Recommendation: The work group made a recommendation on how to consider students who exited the state/public school and then returned. If a student took the ACCESS test in South Dakota, this is considered the first year and the first ACCESS score. If the student did not take the ACCESS test in South Dakota, the student receives a "0". If a student exited South Dakota public school for three or more

years, the student would receive "0" points in South Dakota. If the student is not in the district for 3 years, the district could appeal the SD DOE decision. This process will be revisited in 2 years when more data is available.

Long Term Goal
The following recommendation was made at the December meeting.
Year 1   Students will be one-fifth of the way to goal
Year 2   Students will be two-fifths of the way to goal
Year 3   Students will be three-fifths of the way to goal
Year 4   Students will be four-fifths of the way to goal
Year 5   All students will reach goal

Comments -
- With this chart we are expecting more growth in the first years. When a student moves to middle school, growth flattens out; growth looks good in elementary, but not so good in middle school.
- Many times when EL students come in at 5th grade they remain EL students all the way through high school.
- The level the student enters at make a greater difference than the student's age.
- Could there be a different table of expectations for each level of school – elementary, middle school, high school, as level and time was more consistent then grade?
- Proficiency level would be better than composite scores.
- Trend level is based on where the student is starting.
- Our mid-level students are not exiting as quickly. We don't penalize if you are not getting to goal. We look at each individual student's projection. We also reset the students each year based on their scores.
- In the growth model a student will be proficient in three years; in this process we set proficiency for five years as the standard.
- We do not have a chart showing growth. We could show that if a student lost ground in one year, the student would need to make up that ground and make additional ground to be ahead of the curve in order for the school to get the bonus points.
- This won't make much difference with a district that has one or two EL students, but in a district with a large population, it will make a huge difference. Large numbers of students may not get the extra point and this is a concern.
- We will run more potential models to see what the numbers will show us. When the data was run by grouping cluster of grades, the data didn't seem to make a difference. Should there by a variation by grade cluster?

Lunch

Removing an Erroneous English Learner Designation
The work group recommended the following procedure for removing the English learner designation from any student who was erroneously identified.

Recommendation: If the language is changed from non-English back to English, the LEA must fill out a Home Language Survey (HLS) form, provide the appropriate documentation (including original HLS and parent sign-off) and place it in the district file. The DOE may review the information, ELP assessment data

(WIDA ACCESS scores), and language history. If DOE is satisfied that the student truly doesn't speak another language, DOE will approve the change and the student's information is changed in the state Infinite Campus database by the LEA. The LEA must notify the parents that the student is not in the program. The LEA must provide assurance to DOE that the student's needs will be addressed by other programming or interventions.

Students who Re-Enter the Program
Comments -
- Do they start over in the accountability system?
- The district can re-do the screener at their discretion. Should they take the W-APT?
- We would treat them the same for accountability purposes.
- If a student drops more than 1 year, especially for the older students, we need to question the program services the student received.
- The students will get credit for exiting twice, but also get dinged.
- The district must follow the students for two years of monitoring after exiting. We must take into consideration that not allowing the student back in the program would be a violation of the students civil rights. If this is not happening, the school should be moved up on the list of monitoring by the SEA.

Recommendation : The work group recommended that students re-entering the ELP program would come back into the program at the point where they exited. SD DOE will follow the same procedures we use for accountability.

ACCESS Alternate Assessment English Learners Students
A student can only take the ACCESS Alternative Assessment if the student is taking the Smarter Balanced Alternative Assessment. Currently, South Dakota has approximately 100 student in all grades who qualify to take the Smarter Balanced Alternative (73 are currently in tested grades).

At the June 13 meeting of the work group, the group recommended that the following be considered: Should a category be added for students with disabilities? The work group wants to look at the possibility of discontinuing testing of students who are plateauing because they have reached diminished progression. The student's IEP team would make the decision to stop testing. These students would not exit and would not be reported. The question is whether this would create a new loop-hole in our testing.

Recommendation: The work group recommends that if a student with disabilities doesn't decrease a level or if the student exits after taking the ACCESS Alternative Assessment, the school/district would get 1.0 point.

Discussion of Special Populations
Native American Students
Malone phoned Mato Standing High, SD DOE Director of Indian Education, for a discussion with him about identification of Native American students as English learners. Further discussion will take place during upcoming tribal consultations.

Colony Students
Malone asked the work group to make comments about English learner services for the students in

Hutterite colonies. The students in the many colonies speak Hutterische, a form of German, and study German as their first language in German school. Most parents are bi-lingual having studied in public schools; however, they do not speak English at home. Concern was voiced that many of the students routinely repeat kindergarten and yet very little EL assistance is available for these students. Is this a civil rights issue? SD DOE's position has been that Kindergarten standards must be taught in both junior kindergarten and kindergarten and a parent may move his/her child directly from junior kindergarten to first grade without attending kindergarten first.

The work group discussed the programming needed to serve the special populations. Students must have a block of time for instruction – sheltered instruction. English language development must be taught by a qualified teacher. One possible idea was a pilot project with a university to launch a program in two schools.

Exit Criteria
Recommendation: The work group recommended that English language learner program exit criteria be a composite score of "5" on the ACCESS test WIDA scoring and that this exit score apply to the 2017-2018 school year.

We anticipate that this will increase the number of students in the program.

Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.